

# Inside Seven

SEPTEMBER 1999

CALTRANS DISTRICT 7 EMPLOYEE NEWSLETTER

## Equipment Service Center Sub-Shop 3: "The Best Service Possible"



Hard working Sub-Shop 3 employees from left, Gilbert Mota, Felipe Renteria and Melvin Fujii proudly stand before two of the Traffic Management trucks in their care.

Service is their business – their only business. And with the critical responsibility for servicing the hundreds of Caltrans vehicles in their care, the hard-working heavy equipment and automotive mechanics at Caltrans Equipment Service Center Sub-Shop 3 definitely know their business. A vehicle service and repair center, as well as an in-house parts department, Sub-Shop 3's goal is simply this: to keep Caltrans employees safe while on the road.

Located in the basement of the District Office Building, the clean and well-organized three-man equipment service center runs like a finely tuned car. Gilbert Mota, Heavy Equipment

Mechanic and Acting Supervisor since early this year, said he has a great crew — they car-pool together, have lunch together, and most importantly work very well together. Mota, who recently received a special letter of commendation from Sam Esquenazi, Senior Transportation Engineer, for excellent service on the Traffic Management trucks, previously worked for the private sector for eleven years for a contractor for the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department's automotive pool. Here at Caltrans, the multitude of vehicles cared for by Mota and the mechanics include the vanpool and construction vehicles, the Traffic Management Team (TMT) trucks, and the

complete fleet of vehicles used in conducting everyday state business.

Each vehicle is on a specially scheduled calendar for service. And there are three different levels of service, depending on the age and mileage of the vehicle. Level "A" is a light-duty preventive maintenance; "B" service includes a more detailed and intensive inspection; and "C" service is akin to an annual inspection. Even though a driver may not be aware that it's time for a vehicle's service, the mechanics definitely do. A notice is left on the vehicle that it's time for a check-up. If the vehicle requires repairs, they perform them in the least amount of downtime. "We try to capture a problem before the driver even knows there is one," said Mota. "The mechanics want to make a repair before it comes a broken down repair. And that's what preventive maintenance is all about. Preventive maintenance and safety are the keys."

Because so many employees drive state vehicles, the work they do is vitally important. Fifteen-year Sub-Shop 3 veteran, Automotive Mechanic, Felipe Renteria and six-month newcomer, Automotive Helper, Melvin Fujii, see a vast amount of work on a daily basis — a lot of work. Brake jobs; oil, lube and filter service; steering components; lighting systems; balancing and rotating tires; smog checks; you name it and the Sub-Shop 3 does it, and they do it well. Collectively both employees have over 35 years automotive experience, inside and outside of Caltrans. They even perform washing and cleaning, inside the vehicle and out. David McDonough, Heavy Mechanic Supervisor for Sub-Shops 3 and 7, said, "Our mission at the Equipment Service Centers is to provide high quality equipment and serv-

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## Route 210 Construction —

### Forging Ahead Towards The New Millenium ... The Progress – The People

By Rick Holland

Scheduled for completion in 2002, the Route 210 construction project is moving along at a rapid pace.

Only six months have passed since the February 2 Route 210 Groundbreaking ceremony, marking the beginning of construction on the first of five bridges in the city of Claremont. Since then, a lot of progress has taken place. Indian Hill Boulevard and Towne Avenue, the first two of the five are almost complete and expected to open to traffic by the end of September. The Thompson Creek Bridge is also presently under construction and almost complete. Kal Lambaz, Resident Engineer said, "things are going pretty good now. There were a few obstacles with utilities, but everything seems to be working itself out. Billy Rojas, Principle Assistant Resident Engineer, has done a great job at coordinating the field operations. It's been a team effort." Once construction is complete on these two bridges, the streets will be reopened to traffic. Detours will then be set up for Mountain and Mills Avenue. Once the detours are in place, Mountain and Mills will be fully closed. The closures will allow construction to begin at the Mountain and Mills overcrossings. Chia Chi Wang is the Senior on the project.

In La Verne construction is well under way on six of seven structures. The foundations have been poured and the decks are being formed at Wheeler Avenue, Emerald Avenue and Live Oak Canyon. Construction at Fruit Street is scheduled to start soon. Work on the two pedestrian bridges at Bixby and Chelsea is also progressing. Jose Ventocilla, Senior Engineer said, "Everything is going smooth in La Verne. Everyone involved is working hard and being cooperative." Rudy Cao, Resident Engineer on the project and his crew are doing an excellent job.

Marco Ruano, Route 210 Corridor Project Manager, thinks progress is going well. Ruano said, "There have been some small obstacles that have come about, but that is expected when you are excavating and digging underground. Generally, if there are going to be any problems, you find them when the foundation work is being done. Once we get up in the air and start construction of the "super structure" everything should go pretty smoothly."

Greg Farr, Senior Transportation Engineer said, "It's amazing how things are coming together. I have eleven engineers working for me and twenty other folks from different aspects of the job to work with. Yet somehow or other things seem to work out. It gets pretty hectic some-

times, but I think the entire design staff is doing a great job."

Two flume structures are being built to convey the existing Los Angeles flood control channels across the freeway. Carnie Ho is the Senior on this project. The construction of the flumes is 65% complete. They are expected to be full flow by mid-October. Ho said, "A lot of changes have taken place, but we are actually running ahead of schedule. I am happy to say we have no claims on the job and everything is going well. Michael Chu and Michael Francis are doing a great job coordinating the field work."

A lot of credit goes to the contractors on the projects. They are the ones doing the bulk of the work, but without the oversight, experience and expertise of Caltrans staff, a project of this magnitude would be difficult to complete. The cities have been very cooperative. Teamwork has been key. Caltrans staff has worked very closely with the public works and police departments of both La Verne and Claremont. This effort has allowed minimal disruption to the residents that live in the corridor.

It takes more than concrete, steel and heavy equipment to build a project like this. Prior to construction, a lot of hard work went into the planning and design of the project. Traffic and environmental studies had to be completed. Public hearings and meetings with the cities involved had to be planned for and attended. Appraisals of the properties in the freeway right-of-way had to be done. Hundreds of homes in the right-of-way were needed. This meant that Caltrans' right-of-way agents had to go into the homes of many long-time residents and negotiate deals. Acquisition of these homes was a long, tedious process. It takes a lot of patience, perseverance, persistence and fortitude to be able to accomplish these things. A great deal of the success achieved must also be attributed to the cooperation and support of the community, elected officials and local businesses.

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Construction of the flume structure continues in La Verne.



## Equal Opportunity Corner

# Disability Re-Survey 2000

By Cathi McMahan, Equal Opportunity Officer

In September District 7 will be participating in the Statewide Disability Re-Survey 2000. Under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and California Government Code Section 19233, the State Personnel Board requires departments to periodically provide employees with the opportunity to self-identify their disabilities. The purpose of the Survey is to develop employment goals and to improve the representation of persons with disabilities in the state work force.

The data that is collected from the questionnaires will only be used to prepare reports designed to identify where discrimination may occur and will help facilitate the employment of persons with disabilities. The information gathered will not be reviewed by a medical officer and will not identify employees individually. The data will be incorporated into the State Controller's Office Employment History Database. Once the form is inputted into the database it will be destroyed.

All information requested on the questionnaire, including your Social Security Number, is requested on a voluntary basis. Your confidentiality is guaranteed in accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974. Your Social Security Number is needed to identify you as an employee of the department. If you do not provide your Social Security Number you cannot be counted as an employee of our department with a disability.

Departments are required to collect disability information on an ongoing basis. The information is gathered several dif-

ferent ways. Departmental personnel offices are responsible for distributing the State Employee Disability Questionnaire to all new and rehired employees and for collecting the form from these employees. Current employees can make changes in their disability designation by contacting their departmental personnel offices. Departments are also required to conduct re-surveys of employees to update disability information at least once every five years.

The survey asks two questions. The first asks if are you an individual with a disability and the second asks what types of impairments you have. There are check boxes available to identify the impairments. There is a box to check if you do not have a disability.

Although completion of the disability questionnaire is voluntary, I want to encourage you to complete it accurately and return it. Why? It is very important for the State to have complete and accurate information on the representation of employees with disabilities in order to justify programs and resources needed to facilitate the hiring of persons with disabilities. It also takes just five minutes of your time! The survey will be attached to your September paycheck and an envelope will be provided for the form to be returned. All surveys must be returned by October 8, 1999.

If you have any questions about the survey, please contact the Equal Opportunity Office at ext. 7-0597 or Seyed Amir Torabzadeh, Disability Committee Coordinator at 7-0085.



A reprinted "Quality in Caltrans" memorandum from José Medina, Director

Caltrans is a world leader in transportation because of the dedication and commitment of its employees. But for the Department to maintain that leadership position in these rapidly changing times, all of us must work as a team, look for improvement opportunities and implement them. We must measure our progress and make sure we're meeting our customers' needs and expectations. We call this "Quality in Caltrans."

In the weeks and months ahead, you will be hearing about the work of our leadership team as we plot our Department's course for a new century. While we may emphasize some areas and de-emphasize others, one thing won't change: our commitment to Quality and Continuous Improvement principles.

As Governor Gray Davis said in his "State of the State" speech, we are all in an "Era of Higher Expectations." That's why I'm asking all Caltrans employees to join with me to:

- Identify and be responsive to customer requirements.
- Learn about Quality and Continuous Improvement practices. Dynamic training is available statewide through the Quality Program.
- Identify processes that could be improved, and propose solutions. Place special emphasis on key areas that impact your daily activities.
- For more complex processes, talk to your manager or supervisor about forming a cross-functional Quality/Process Improvement Team.
- Make sure to measure the progress of your team or office so you can answer the all-important question: "How will we really know when we succeed?"
- And finally, celebrate those successes!

With teamwork, we have the power to effect positive change in our workplace, and now is the time to use it. To find out more, visit the Quality Program intra-net

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## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

### Quest For Olympic Gold Is All In The Family Caltrans Mother and Grandmother Support Their Olympic Hopeful

Terri Harrison, Transportation Engineering Technician for Traffic Investigations, said she always knew her daughter, L'Orangerie (Lai Lai) Crawford, 17, had keen athletic abilities, and has no doubt she has what it takes to make it to the 2000 Olympics next year in Sydney, Australia. Terri's mother and Lai Lai's grandmother, Flossie Harrison, Office Technician for Environmental Planning, said she is so proud that her granddaughter has followed in her footsteps as a star track and field athlete and champion shotputter. Once a star shotputter in high school, and the recipient of a track and field scholarship to Johnson C. Smith University in Charlotte, North Carolina, Flossie has much to be proud of. And a natural athlete herself for as long as she can remember, Lai Lai Crawford said, "It feels like a dream that I have come this close to be invited to the Olympic trials." So, after just receiving a track and field scholarship to the University of Southern California (USC), it's obvious they're all right: Lai Lai Crawford has the makings of our next star, olympic champion.

Recently voted Athlete of the Year as a senior at Santa Monica High School, Lai Lai was on the school's track and field team, as well as the basketball and tennis teams. For the last two years straight, she was the highest rebounder on her basketball team, as well as placing third in the State in the shotput both years. A focused and dedicated athlete who has excelled especially in track and field, she is the recipient of numerous awards and trophies.

Last month Lai Lai spent five days at the Olympic Training Center in San Diego for a special program to perfect and hone her skills. So it will be early next year when Lai Lai's proud family will escort her to the tryouts for the 2000 Olympics. "I have no doubt she will be competing in the Olympics," said the thrilled Terri. "She is so gifted."

Terri added, "I am extremely proud of my daughter. She has stayed focused on track and field, has done well scholastically and has been a bright and obedient child. She is lovable and I like her too; not just because she's my daughter; I like her



Lai Lai gets ready to let the shot-put fly at the California International Federation Master's Meet last May 28, where she came in second in track and field - one of her best ever track meets - and where she qualified for the state finals.

as a person. Because of our faith, the Lord has blessed her to achieve and obtain her reachable goals. And she has strong family support as well." Added Flossie, "I had no idea when Lai Lai was a young girl that she would follow in my footsteps as an athlete, and especially, a shotputter. I am so proud of my granddaughter."

The talented athlete and her family are elated that the scholarship was awarded by USC. Terri said, "USC has the top coaches in the world in track and field. We couldn't be happier for her." And with all of the time Lai Lai spends on her team sports and Olympic training, she still manages to maintain a solid B average at school. Anyone who has tried mixing studies with anything else knows what an enormous accomplishment that is.

When asked about her dream of Olympic glory, the multi-talented athlete said, "I can't believe how the Lord has blessed me with athletic abilities and my scholarship to USC. I am very proud.



From left: Grandmother Flossie Harrison, Olympic hopeful Lai Lai Crawford and her mother Terri Harrison beam in anticipation of Olympic glory.

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## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

# Equipment Operator Coaches Little League District Champions



Juan Castaneda, (back row, second from left) and his champion Little League Indians at the beautiful Bishop Canyon Field.

When friends contacted Caltrans Equipment Operator, Juan Castaneda, about becoming a Little League coach for a newly forming league in northeast Los Angeles, Castaneda didn't balk; he jumped at the chance! Having spent several years coaching youngsters in baseball and T-ball at the Cypress Park Recreation Center, Castaneda was ready, willing and able for the new and exciting challenge. And a mere two seasons later, the proud coach took his talented team, the Indians, to the 1999 Little League District Sectionals after winning the All-Star Tournament of Champions.

What is so amazing is that the team is so new. "Some teams have been together 15 to 20 years and have not made it as far as we have," said the elated Castaneda. Unfortunately, a team from Northridge knocked the Indians out of contention for the Little League World Series this year, but they have high hopes for next season. "It's been a really exciting season for all of us involved — the kids, the parents, the coaches, everyone. It's been a great year."

The process of developing a new league began by locating a playing field in the northeast section of Los Angeles at a

location near Dodger Stadium called Bishop Canyon Field. Donated by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power who owned the land, the bare grounds were beautifully transformed into a Little League playing field to accommodate the new league. And while waiting for their brand new field, the league played their first year at the Boy's Club in Lincoln Heights.

The new Northeast Los Angeles Little League is comprised of 16 teams from the communities of Glassell Park, Cypress Park, Echo Park, Lincoln Heights, Highland Park and communities in the San Gabriel Valley. There are four teams from four different age groups. They are: four seniors teams ages 15-16; four juniors teams ages 13-14; four majors teams ages 11-12; four minors teams ages 9-10; and there is also T-ball, for kids ages 5-8. In addition, a girl's softball team was formed. Castaneda coaches the talented majors team, the Indians, who made it all the way to the District Sectionals. "It was a rare and unique achievement for a team this new to have accomplished this much this soon," said Castaneda.

In 1998, their first year, the players and coaches got to know each other and

worked hard to grow together as teams. The following season, Castaneda's Indians won the Tournament of Champions, where the first place teams in the league played each other. They received a large trophy and banner. The trophy is kept for one year and is transferred each year to the new champions. "We are all very proud to be the keepers of the trophy," said Castaneda. The best players went on to compete in the All-Stars Tournament of Champions; winners played in the District Sectionals and the next stop would have been the Little League World Series. Each year Castaneda says the players just keep getting better and better. "We have a great league with friendly, talented kids and committed volunteers," added the coach. All coaches and others who give their time and talents are volunteers for the non-profit Little League organization. The caring and dedicated individuals give freely of themselves, their time and talents for the kids. Castaneda's two sons and daughter are also players: Juan, Jr., age 13, plays for the juniors; Andrew, age 8, plays for the minors; and daughter Marina, age 15 plays for the girls softball team.

Their third season picks up again in September and Castaneda is filling his

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Juan Castaneda with his three children; from left, Juan-13, Marina-15, and Andrew-8.





Columns of bridges under construction on Wheeler Avenue in La Verne.

## 210 Construction

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Yes, the Route 210 Freeway construction project is forging ahead. Although it's far from complete, now is the time to take time out to recognize the hard work and accomplishments achieved thus far — from the support staff to the engineers, everyone has played a role and everyone should be commended for their efforts. We hear it time and time again, but teamwork is important! For years, Caltrans has been recognized as a world leader in transportation. If we are to continue to be world leaders, we must continue to rely on resourcefulness, dedication and teamwork.

Thanks to everyone who has and will continue to participate in this project. Your efforts are very much appreciated. Congratulations to everyone for a job well done. Keep up the good work!

## Little League

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days trying to get donations for new jackets for his team. With the new season already upon him, Castenda hopes to take the team all the way to the World Series. "And hopefully one of these kids in our Little League will make it to the "big leagues" some day," he said.

Congratulations to Juan Castenda, his District Sectionals Champions Indians, and to all members of the Northeast Los Angeles Little League. Best of luck in the new season. Next stop: the Little League World Series!

For more information regarding the Little League or donations for team jackets, Casteneda can be reached at (213) 620-3318.



In orange shirts from left: Melvin Fujii, Gilbert Mota and Felipe Renteria performing some important automotive diagnostic work, while Caltrans "customer" and former Sub-Shop 3 supervisor, Don Hammer (in white shirt) looks on.

## Sub-Shop 3

*continued from page 1*

ices to meet the needs of Caltrans programs through regularly scheduled preventive maintenance checks, inspections and services. It is our departmental direction that Caltrans vehicles and equipment be available and maintained in a safe, legal and operational manner. The mechanics at Sub-Shop 3 work in a unique environment because in the basement you cannot tell what the weather is like outside, if it's dark or light, day or night. I commend the mechanics who work in the basement on a daily basis for their efforts in maintaining Caltrans equipment."

In addition to supervision, technical assistance and helping the other mechanics when needed, Mota manages the parts department and performs administrative functions. "We always have work," he added.

Our thanks to the dedicated efforts of the Equipment Service Center Sub-Shop 3 for keeping our vehicles in safe working order. Their hard work is very much appreciated by all. "Added Mota, "Our most important customers are the Caltrans employees. And we always give our customers the best service possible!"

## Bits & Pieces.....

The city of Los Angeles has been chosen as the site for the Democratic National Convention (DNC) for the year 2000. National and international media will be on hand to cover give the convention. Certainly, with thousands of visitors to the Los Angeles area, no doubt Caltrans will be impacted in a big way.

According to the Los Angeles Minority Business Opportunity Committee (LAM-BOC) Quarterly, "At least 35,000 visitors, elected officials, staff, volunteers and members of the media are expected to fill the STAPLES Center over the course of the 2000 Convention. Based on the City of Chicago's estimates, the 1996 Convention generated more than \$130 million in direct economic benefits for the city. It is estimated that the DNC 2000 Convention will result in over \$150 million in direct economic benefits to the City of Los Angeles."

Having the spotlight on Los Angeles will certainly give Caltrans an opportunity to shine!

Caltrans Director Jose Medina's visit to District 7 is scheduled for sometime in October or November. Details will be forthcoming. Everyone is invited to participate in the town hall-type meeting.

On Saturday, July 31, 199, volunteers from communities throughout Los Angeles, gathered to perform a cleanup effort, called "Clean Up L.A.," organized by nine Los Angeles Assemblyman, including Tony Cardenas, Gil Cedillo, Robert Hertzberg, Alan Lowenthal, George Nakano, Jack Scott, Antonio Villaraigosa, Herb Wesson and Scott Wildman.

Sponsors of the event included Caltrans, the Los Angeles Conversation Corps, the Los Angeles Dodgers, Pacific Bell and Washington Mutual.

After a continental breakfast and pep-

talk, some forty volunteers met at various sites along freeway on- and off-ramps throughout the San Fernando Valley and Los Angeles, and at other locations where alleys needed cleanup or graffiti needed removal.

After the cleanup effort, participants were treated to a Dodgers vs. Arizona baseball game at Dodger Stadium. Caltrans wishes to thank all volunteers who gave their time and efforts to help clean up Los Angeles.

## Quality

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website at:

<http://trmac.dot.ca.gov/QualityProgram/>  
Contact your local Quality Coordinator Refugio Dominguez (7-5580); or Quality Program Manager, Russell Snyder, at (916) 654-3453 (8-464-3453).

JOSÉ MEDINA  
Director



Ms. Pat Reid  
District 7 Media Relations/Public Affairs

Dear Ms. Reid:

On behalf of the Los Angeles Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), let me extend a most heartfelt thank you, as well as my own personal gratitude, for the great job which you and your assisting Caltrans staff did in organizing the ceremony at Casa De Adobe last Friday for the subject presentation.

Obviously, you are very experienced in arranging for ceremonies, getting the message to the media, and handling all the attendant tasks; your highly professional performance resulted in a notable event which was enjoyed, I believe, by everyone who was there. Please extend ASCE's appreciation to all of the Caltrans people who helped make the ceremony a success.

Sincerely,  
Irving Sherman, Chairman  
History and Heritage Committee  
Los Angeles Section, ASCE

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- |          |  |
|----------|--|
| Sept. 4  | Pacific Coast Highway (PCH) Safety Awareness Expo at four parking lot locations including Zuma Beach, Santa Monica Pier, Temescal Cyn. and Topanga Cyn. A multi-agency task force will be set up at the four locations to education the public about driving safely along PCH and to also kick-off the new PCH Safety Task Force safety campaign. Participating agencies include Caltrans, California Highway Patrol, City of Los Angeles Police Department, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, Santa Monica Police Department, and City of Malibu. Watch for the Goodyear Blimp in the evening skies over PCH one to three days prior to the event publicizing PCH Safety Awareness Expo. |
| Sept. 5  | A safety education and awareness booth will be stationed at the End of the Summer Bash at Gladstones Restaurant located at Sunset Blvd. and PCH in Malibu, and sponsored by KROQ radio station. Caltrans representatives will distribute safety and educational materials regarding the PCH Safety Task Force and other safety information regarding PCH.  |
| Sept. 27 | Visit to District 7 from Danish Delegation representing the Committee for Technology and the Environment   |
| Sept/Oct | Visit to District 7 from the Vice Consul of the British Consulate General and the Rolls Royce Company regarding new technology.  |

## Cultural Cuisine

### IT'S THAT BLUEBERRY TIME OF YEAR

#### BLUEBERRY CORN MUFFINS

From Health Tracks Newsletter, a publication of Glendale Adventist Medical Center

- 1-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup each buttermilk and orange juice
- 1/2 cup whole wheat flour
- 1/4 cup margarine or butter, melted
- 1/2 cup cornmeal
- 1 egg, beaten
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon grated orange peel
- 2-1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 2 cups fresh blueberries
- 1/2 teaspoon each baking soda and salt

In a large bowl, combine flours, cornmeal, sugar, baking powder, baking soda and salt. In a small bowl, combine buttermilk, orange juice, margarine, egg and orange peel; add to flour mixture and mix only until moist. Stir in blueberries. Spoon batter into prepared muffin cups. Bake at 400 degrees for 20-25 minutes or until a wooden toothpick inserted near the muffin's center comes out clean.

#### JEANNE'S BLUEBERRY JELLO

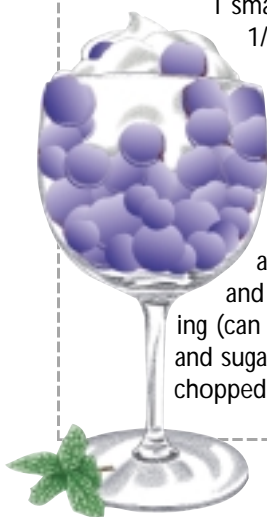
A hit at every potluck!

- 2 small boxes (or one large) blackberry or red raspberry jello
- 1 small can crushed pineapple (drain and save juice)
- 1 16-ounce can Oregon Blueberries (drain and save juice)
- 2 cups boiling water

#### Frosting

- 1 brick Philadelphia cream cheese (soften at room temperature for one hour)
- 1 small tub sour cream
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 3 teaspoons vanilla
- 1 cup chopped pecans or walnuts

Combined drained juices from crushed pineapple and blueberries to make one cup. Discard remainder of juice. In a 9" X 12" pyrex dish, add the two cups of boiling water to jello. Stir and dissolve for two minutes. Add crushed pineapple, blueberries and the one cup of reserved juice. Refrigerate until firm. For frosting (can be made ahead of time): Place cream cheese, sour cream, vanilla and sugar in bowl. Beat well. Frost firmed jello with frosting. Top with chopped nuts.



## Olympics

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And I could not have done any of this if it were not for the support of my wonderful family."

Hearty congratulations and best wishes to Lai Lai, Terri and Flossie on their family's quest for Olympic success. No doubt the Caltrans family will be cheering along during this very exciting time. Good luck!

### EDITOR'S NOTE:

Please send articles or ideas for Inside 7 to Jeanne Bonfilio, Public Affairs, via e-mail by the 5th of each month to be considered for publication. All submissions are due to Graphic Arts for typesetting no later than the 15th of each month. For further information, please call 7-3630.

## Inside Seven

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